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THE CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION—  
L'ASSOCIATION MÉDICALE CANADIENNE

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### A NOSEGAY FOR DONALD C. GRAHAM

WITH what words shall we celebrate the virtues of a friend who has just left the editor's chair to, in his own words, "go into the Dean business"? Thoreau who wrote an immortal essay on friendship did so with some misgivings ("The universe seems bankrupt as soon as we begin to discuss the character of individuals"), but we who were chained with Don Graham to the rowing bench of a weekly journal for five and a half long years, although we also feel some misgivings, have a pleasant duty to discharge.

If he could be recalled from the shades, Thoreau would be well equipped to anatomize our complex but delightful colleague. His dictum "To be awake is to be alive" gives an important clue to one of D. C. G.'s salient qualities. Except when he was desperately tired (and he often was) he was at all times alert, responding quickly and intelligently to ideas from any quarter. In addition to this acuity, he has the rarer and essentially ageless quality of spontaneity which gives his mind a flexibility and sureness uncommon among members of our conservative profession. When something out of the ordinary was put forward for publication, his reply invariably was "What did you have in mind?" and together we would explore the *pros* and *cons* of publication. However, a mild exterior and an open mind were joined, in his case, to a firmness of purpose that never faltered once he had made up his mind. Furthermore, when that point was reached, he took full responsibility and never by word or sign deflected any subsequent criticism on his colleagues. In short, he is honourable, responsible and courageous.

A notable feature of Don Graham's personality is his wide-ranging and lively sense of humour and a concomitant love of jest. Not for nothing is Rabelais one of his favourite authors. Many of his friends

will remember with delight the brief tours he gives of the exotic gardens of the Rabelaisian imagination. His own jokes are gentle, delivered in low key and, in the best sense of the word, sly. Once, in accepting a paper on ancient coins and medicine, he complimented the author in a brief postscript: "P.S. You certainly phrase a mean coin." In another direction who, having heard him, will forget how in his leisurely, amiable way he tells one of his favourite stories, like that concerning the two merchants who went out to buy "the *blek-est* of *blek* suits"; or the one which ends with the line "I tell you, I'm just a fraud. That mouse is a ventriloquist."

A lively enjoyment of the humorous in its infinite variety is surely a mark of a receptive, well-stocked, "alive" mind. J. W. Mellor, in reproving those who confuse the fun-loving view of life with the inconsequential, said "In spite of St. Paul's little boast: 'When I became a man, I put away childish things,' I hope to be light-hearted enough, and young enough, to relish and appreciate those very things which please the juveniles. I am sorry for those who sniff them puerile."

Farewell, good friend. We who worked most closely with you in your years as editor are delighted to say that these years were an intellectual adventure, and even if the gut-grinding stress of publishing a weekly journal can never be "fun", you often made it seem so.

### ANALGESIA AND ANESTHESIA IN OBSTETRICS

ON January 19, 1847, James Young Simpson of Edinburgh administered ether to a woman in labour who required a version and breech extraction. Thus, for the first time, the association of pain and suffering with parturition was interrupted and it appeared that the horrors of difficult childbirth might become a matter of history. Simpson believed that beyond humanitarian reasons the relief of pain in these potentially traumatic conditions could be life-saving. He said, "I believe that as a counteraction to the morbid influence of pain, the state of artificial anaesthesia does not only imply a saving of human suffering, but also a saving of human life . . . and I firmly believe that the superinduction of anaesthesia in obstetric practice will yet be found to diminish and remove also, in some degree, the perils, as well as the pains of labour." Simpson continued to use ether routinely to relieve the pains of childbirth in his obstetrical practice, changing to chloroform in November 1848. The use of anesthetics in obstetrics stirred up considerable controversy in the medical and lay press. The lines were not drawn over the merits or demerits of chloroform, but rather as a result of Simpson's enthusiasm and his argument with the theologians over the interpretation of the words, "in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children",